



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

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Memorandum

TO: Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee DATE: May 30, 2008
FR: Valerie Knepper, MTC Staff W.I.: 1611
RE: TransLink[®] for Transit Oriented Development (TOD): Pilot Project

MTC staff, working cooperatively with AC Transit staff, have developed a new pilot project that will provide transit passes for residents of selected transit oriented developments (TOD), and to subsequently evaluate the impacts of the program. This project, called “TransLink[®] for TOD,” will provide residents of the selected TODs in Berkeley, Oakland, Richmond, and Emeryville with free unlimited local and Transbay travel on AC Transit’s system for one year using TransLink[®] cards. These TransLink[®] for TOD customers will provide valuable feedback about the TransLink[®] program, as well as provide travel pattern and usage data to support MTC’s ongoing TOD initiatives. This pilot will also serve as TransLink[®]’s initial “institutional” pass program, using the selected TODs residents as the test subjects.

Description of the Pilot TransLink[®] for TOD Project

The TransLink[®] for TOD project begins next month and ends after the one year AC Transit passes expire. A report will be issued after that time outlining the results of the project. The information below outlines the distribution strategy, selection criteria, project funding and evaluation components.

- TransLink[®] cards will be distributed to up to 1,900 TransLink[®] cards loaded with unlimited travel on AC Transit for one year to residents of a maximum of 1,500 TOD housing units. The project

will include customized transit information maps and other support materials.

- TODs are selected based on the following characteristics: must be very close to high quality AC Transit service, must be high density housing with few parking spots or areas and must have a building site manager willing and able to publicize and support implementation of the project. The overall program will include: TODs in multiple cities, a mixture of rental and owner-occupied residences, a combination of already occupied and currently leasing/selling, and a variety of housing and population types. The TOD must also include a high proportion of affordable units.
- Regional Measure 2 (RM-2) TransLink® marketing funds are being used to support the cost of the transit pass costs through a funding agreement with AC Transit. These funds will be used to pay AC Transit their “eco-pass” rate of \$100 per person for full transit service (including both Transbay and local service). RM-2 TransLink® marketing funds will also be used to support marketing, outreach, and program evaluation using in MTC’s current marketing contractor.
- The project includes an evaluation component that will entail pre-, during and post-surveys of transit usage by evaluating each participant’s usage on his/her TransLink® card.

Benefits of the TransLink® for TOD Pilot Project

For the TransLink® program managers, this project helps test the demand for TransLink® transit passes and the impact on transit ridership by introducing free transit passes for residents in a variety of TODs. It also creates a network of TransLink® customers to provide ongoing customer feedback. This model will provide the needed data to help determine the viability of future arrangements with cities and developers to share the cost of subsidizing transit passes for TOD residents and employees. For MTC, this project serves the goals of the regional FOCUS project, the

Regional Transportation Plan and creates synergy between and among multiple MTC initiatives—increasing transit use, support for TODs, equity/environmental justice, smart parking and TransLink®. It implements recommendations from MTC’s Smart Parking Study by encouraging cities to reconsider parking minimums and supporting transit passes for TOD residents. The TransLink® for TOD project also benefits other groups, which include:

- TOD residents: this project provides additional transportation mobility and financial benefits, particularly of significant importance to low-income households with children.
- Developers/site managers: this project provides a way to assist their current residents, to support and enhance the “green” ecological orientation of their building/development and to generate additional publicity for their developments.
- AC Transit: this project provides a test of a residential universal pass program, as well as an opportunity to create greater awareness of under-recognized quality service, to build ridership on underutilized routes, and to build longer-term bus ridership based on locations with high quality transit service.

Status/Next Steps

MTC staff will be at your June 5 meeting to provide a presentation on the above information. Staff would appreciate your comments and assistance in implementing this project (please note that we need to work quickly due to the timing requirements of the funding sources.) MTC staff is currently in the process of signing up approximately 1,300 housing units, with preliminary participation from:

- Berkeley – about 540 units, all affordable, seniors and mixed ages, mostly rental, all already occupied, primarily along University Avenue and San Pablo Avenue;

- Oakland – about 450 units, both rental and for-sale, mixture of occupied and available, mixed affordable and market rate, several locations;
- Emeryville – about 60 units, all affordable, all senior, on San Pablo Ave.;
- El Cerrito – about 158 units, mixed income, all rental units;
- Capacity of approximately 300 units – seeking market rate units already occupied to balance the current participants.

MTC, along with its partners, are planning a press event to publicize the project on June 10th in Berkeley. We are also in the process of developing the pre-survey and customized transit maps.